AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Cancel claim 15 without prejudice. Please accept amended claim 8 as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of providing an electronic environment for facilitating user interaction with a business comprising the steps of:

displaying an abstract graphical proxy for the environment;

displaying an abstract graphical proxy for at least one consumer within the environment; and

providing the at least one consumer with interactive business facilities via the abstract graphical proxy for the environment.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the environment is a marketplace structured by the business.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the environment includes a chat application.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the chat application includes one of private chat and public chat.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the environment comprises interactive applets.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each consumer proxy is individualized according to consumer input.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the consumer proxy is individualized according to consumer activity of the at least one consumer within the environment.

8. (Currently Amended) A method comprising the steps of:

representing a social proxy in an abstract graphical display of a marketplace for facilitating consumer interaction, wherein the abstract graphical display of the marketplace is an auction proxy including concentric circles, an inner-most circle for displaying auction information, an inner circle for indicating bidding activity, and an outer circle for indicating user interest;

defining a consumer proxy of a consumer, the consumer proxy having updatable variables;

displaying the consumer proxy within the abstract graphical display of the marketplace; and

updating the consumer proxy variables periodically.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the social proxy is defined by a provider.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the social proxy is extensible.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the social proxy is used interactively by the consumer with an application, wherein the application is an extension of the social proxy.

12. (Original) The method of claim 8, further includes the step of displaying a link to a second social proxy.

13. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the social proxy is one of a plurality of social proxies within a hierarchical system of proxies.

14. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the step of displaying the consumer proxy, further comprises limiting data displayed based on a consumer's access credentials.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the abstract graphical display of the marketplace is a line including at least two consumer proxies, the line indicating the consumer proxies priority with respect to a service provided by a business.

17. (Original) The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:

defining a business proxy of a business, the business proxy having updatable variables;

displaying the business proxy within the abstract graphical display of the marketplace; and

updating the business proxy variables periodically.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the business proxy interacts with the consumer proxy.

19. (Previously Presented) A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable be the machine to perform method steps for facilitating the presentation of an marketplace environment in graphical form the method steps comprising:

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displaying an abstract graphical proxy for the environment;

displaying an abstract graphical proxy for at least one consumer within the environment; and

providing the at least one consumer with interactive business facilities via the abstract graphical proxy for the environment.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the environment is a marketplace structured by the business.

21. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the abstract graphical proxy for the environment is extensible.

22. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein each consumer proxy is individualized according to consumer input.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the consumer proxy is individualized according to consumer activity of the at least one consumer within the environment.